

# Reducing the Achievement Gap

## Grant Application

Deadline for Submission:  
September 15, 2004, 4:30 p.m.

Iowa Department of Education  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

## **Introduction**

With the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), great attention has been focused on student achievement and the gaps that exist among some subgroups. In Iowa, the subgroups include African American students, Hispanic students, Native American students, English language learners, students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP), migrant students, and students eligible for free or reduced lunch.

During the 2003-2004 Iowa General Assembly, the Legislature directed the Iowa Department of Education to establish a competitive grant program that supports school district efforts to address the achievement gap. Districts should use their most recent Annual Progress Report (APR) disaggregate data aligned with their Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) prioritized needs. Up to four (4) grants in the amount of \$125,000 each may be awarded to qualifying school districts.

## **Program Description**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the grant is to encourage the implementation and use of research based strategies that have the highest probability of improving student achievement by narrowing the achievement gap.

Grant funds are available for use by recipient school districts for purposes including, but not limited to, assigning highly skilled teachers to high-need students and highly skilled administrators to high-need buildings, maintaining a commitment to cultural competency training, professional development activities that utilize research based strategies, sustaining high expectations for all children, and creating partnerships between schools, families, communities, and businesses.

### **Eligibility**

All public school districts in Iowa are eligible to apply for these funds. Up to four (4) grants of \$125,000 each may be awarded to one school district in each of the following enrollment categories:

- Enrollment of 1199 or less
- More than 1199, but not more than 4749
- Enrollment exceeding 4749
- Any enrollment

## **Uses of Funds PK-12**

- Creating opportunities for enhanced and ongoing professional development that follow the Iowa Professional Development Model
- Establishing and operating summer institutes including follow-up training and that follow the Iowa Professional Development Model
- Creating/aligning partnerships between schools, families, communities, and businesses
- Sustaining high expectations for all children
- Choosing research based activities designed to close the achievement gap among subgroups
- Assigning highly skilled teachers to high-need students
- Assigning highly skilled administrators to high-need buildings
- Maintaining a commitment to cultural competency training

## **Duration**

Funds must be obligated by June 30, 2005, and expended by August 30, 2005.

## **Non-Discrimination Statement**

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age, or marital status in its programs or employment practices. If you have questions or grievances related to this policy, please contact the Legal Consultant, Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146, 515/281-8661

## **Definitions**

**Professional Development:** The term “professional development” means staff training efforts that:

- are based on research and national/local academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessment;
- improve and increase teachers’ knowledge of the academic subjects they teach;
- enable teachers to become highly qualified;
- are sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teachers’ performance in the classroom; and,
- the plan follows the Iowa Professional Development Model.

Summer Institute: The term “summer institute” means staff development conducted during the summer that:

- is conducted for a period of not less than one (1) week that is sustained and has depth;
- includes, as a component, a program that provides direct interaction between teachers, students and faculty;
- provides for follow-up training during the academic year that is conducted in the classroom for a period of not less than three consecutive or nonconsecutive days; and,
- the plan follows the Iowa Professional Development Model.

Scientifically Based Research: The term ‘scientifically based research’ —

(A) means research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs; and

(B) includes research that —

- (i) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- (ii) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- (iii) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators;
- (iv) is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls;
- (v) ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and
- (vi) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review. *No Child Left Behind Act: Title IX — General Provisions: Part A —Definitions Sec. 9101.*

## Proposal Requirements

Each proposal submitted **must** include:

Student Achievement Data: Baseline data that represents the need for intervention with regard to current achievement gaps among subgroups of students.

Research Base: A description of how the activities to be carried out are based on research and how the activities are expected to improve student academic achievement and strengthen the quality of instruction.

Evaluation and Accountability Plan: An evaluation and accountability plan that includes rigorous objectives that measures student academic achievement that includes a regular reporting schedule. The timeline for reporting will be established by the Department after grant awards are determined.

Commitment: Evidence of active long-term planning and involvement of all partners must be documented.

Sustainability: A description of how the funded activities and/or partnership under this proposal will continue after the original period and funding have expired.

## Preparation of Application

Listed below are the required components, in the order that they should appear, of an acceptable application. The narrative sections of the proposal must be double-spaced and the font used must not be smaller than 12-point. Any font style may be used. The application, not including the cover sheet or appendices, shall not exceed 25 pages and must be printed on one side only. Applicants must adhere to the page limitations on the narrative sections, and may not append additional material beyond that allowed in the following list:

**Intent to Apply:** If you intend to apply for this funding opportunity, send an e-mail message to Del Hoover at [del.hoover@iowa.gov](mailto:del.hoover@iowa.gov) NOT LATER than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, September 3, 2004.

**Cover Page:** The cover page should be the first page of the application. Please use the form provided.

**Signature/Assurances:** The assurances for this grant are part of the cover sheet and are conveyed by an original signature from the school district superintendent.

**Abstract:** Provide an abstract of the proposal that briefly and concisely describes the program to be implemented and summarizes the intended results of the program or activities. The abstract may not exceed 2 pages printed on one side only.

**Project Narrative and Timeline:** The program narrative must include a timeline for the implementation of activities and address each of the following items. The narrative section must be double-spaced.

- o **Program Goals and Objectives** - The project's goals, objectives are clearly and explicitly written and are aligned to student achievement needs.
- o **Student Achievement Data** – Student achievement data are analyzed and used to determine goals and objectives. The project addresses the Annual Progress Report (APR) disaggregated data as aligned with the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).
- o **Professional Development** - The staff training is clearly and explicitly aligned with the Iowa Professional Development Model.
- o **Action Plan** – The project includes an action plan that is aligned to the goals.
- o **Research Base** - The research base is identified and an explanation is included regarding the expected improvement in student achievement.
- o **Timeline** - The timeline for the project has been well planned with sufficient detail for success.
- o **Collaboration** - The proposal provides evidence that all parties have had the opportunity for input and will continue to have input in the design and implementation of the project via committees, meetings, etc.
- o **Evaluation** - A formative and summative evaluation plan that is reliable and valid is presented measuring the anticipated outcomes and project effectiveness.
- o **Budget** - Budget categories are clearly & explicitly aligned with proposed project activities. All funds must be expended by August 30, 2005.
- o **Sustainability** - The proposal links this new project with past or ongoing activities and demonstrates the ability of the LEA to continue activities after the grant funds end.

**Budget:** Please use the form provided.

**Partnership Agreements** (if needed): This section shall include a narrative of the roles of the partners and their duties and responsibilities related to the goals and objectives of the project. Please use the form provided

**Appendices:**

Items that further enhance the understanding of the review team may be submitted in addition to the maximum required number of pages (25). Appendix items will NOT be scored, but may serve to enhance the reviewer's understanding. These materials are not expected to replace any of the required narrative or other information necessary to meet the criteria.

Suggested appendix items might include, for example:

- Letters of commitment from each partner, if needed
- Research based reference list

**Proposal Submission**

Applicants must submit an original and five (5) copies of the full proposal to the Iowa Department of Education. The original must include an original ink signature. Fax and e-mail transmission of the complete proposal are not acceptable. To be considered for funding, proposals must be received at the DE by 4:30 p.m. on September 15, 2004. Incomplete or late applications will **not** be considered. Proposals should be mailed or delivered to:

Del Hoover  
Bureau of Instructional Services  
Iowa Department of Education  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

**Review of Proposal**

All public school districts in Iowa are eligible to apply. As proposals are received at the Iowa Department of Education, they will be reviewed for completeness and compliance with the requirements within this Request for Proposal to determine applicant eligibility. If a proposal is late, incomplete, or an applicant cannot establish its eligibility, the proposal will be omitted from the competition. The decision of the Iowa Department of Education is final. Applicants submitting proposals that are withdrawn due to incompleteness or ineligibility will be notified in writing.

A review panel will be identified and trained to read and evaluate eligible applications that reflect the requirements and criteria. Members of the panel will review and score each eligible application and make recommendations to the Iowa Department of Education. Proposals will be ranked according to final scores assigned by the reviewers within the size categories identified on page 2 of this RFP and will be identified for funding consideration.

Following the review, the Department staff will contact project directors/application contact persons to discuss any modification of the project plan that may be required.

### **Review Criteria**

- **Program Goals and Objectives** - The project's goals, objectives are clearly and explicitly written and are aligned to student achievement needs.
- **Student Achievement Data** – Student achievement data are analyzed and used to determine goals and objectives. The project addresses the Annual Progress Report (APR) disaggregated data as aligned with the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).
- **Professional Development** - The staff training is clearly and explicitly aligned with the Iowa Professional Development Model.
- **Action Plan** – The project includes an action plan that is aligned to the goals.
- **Research Base** - The research base is identified and an explanation is included regarding the expected improvement in student achievement.
- **Timeline** - The timeline for the project has been well planned with sufficient detail for success.
- **Collaboration** - The proposal provides evidence that all parties have had the opportunity for input and will continue to have input in the design and implementation of the project via committees, meetings, etc.
- **Evaluation** - A formative and summative evaluation plan that is reliable and valid is presented measuring the anticipated outcomes and project effectiveness.
- **Budget** - Budget categories are clearly & explicitly aligned with proposed project activities. All funds must be expended by August 30, 2005.
- **Sustainability** - The proposal links this new project with past or ongoing activities and demonstrates the ability of the LEA to continue activities after the grant funds end.

### **Award Administration**

#### **Notification**

The applicant will be notified by October 1, 2004, of the status of their proposal.

#### **Award Conditions and Reporting Requirements**

Money will be distributed according to the reporting schedule in the plan. Up to four one-time grants of \$125,000 will be awarded to school districts according to the established criteria. 50% of the grant funds will be allocated upon approval of the grant. 40% of the grant funds will be allocated following the approval of first progress report demonstrating successful implementation. 10% of the grant funds will be allocated upon successful completion of the final progress report.

Each eligible school district receiving a grant will be required to report progress to the Iowa Department of Education. These reports, once approved, will generate a portion of the funds to the school district. The framework for reporting will be aligned with the application criteria listed in this document. Funds to pay for grant activities must be obligated by the school district by June 30, 2005 and expended by August 30, 2005. The final progress report will reflect the district activities indicated in the application timeline.



### **Right to Negotiate**

The Iowa Department of Education reserves the right to negotiate the final award within parameters of the legislation.

### **Appeal Process**

Any applicant of the Reducing the Achievement Gap grant funds may appeal the denial of a properly submitted competitive program grant application or the unilateral termination of a competitive program grant to the director of the department of education. Appeals must be in writing, in the form of an affidavit, and received within ten (10) working days of the date of notice of the decision and must be based on a contention that the process was conducted outside of statutory authority; violated state or federal law, policy or rule; did not provide adequate public notice; was altered without adequate public notice; or involved conflict of interest by staff or committee members. Refer to 281 IAC r. 7.5, the legal authority for this process.

### **Review Criteria:** (Total of 100 points possible)

#### Program Goals & Objectives (5 points maximum possible)

Rubric value	Descriptor	X Weighting	Points
1	The project's goals and objectives are not stated.	1	
3	The project's goals and objectives are stated.	1	
5	The project's goals, objectives and intended outcomes are clearly and explicitly written and aligned with student achievement needs.	1	

#### **Review Comments:**

Student Achievement Data (10 points maximum possible)

Rubric value	Descriptor	X Weighting	Points
1	Student achievement data are not used to determine goals and objectives.	2	
3	Student achievement data are used to determine goals and objectives, but the Annual Progress Report disaggregated data are not aligned with the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan.	2	
5	Student achievement data are analyzed and used to determine goals and objectives. The project addresses the Annual Progress Report disaggregated data as aligned with the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan.	2	

**Review Comments:**

Professional Development Model (15 points maximum possible)

Rubric value	Descriptor	X Weighting	Points
1	The staff training is not aligned with the Iowa Professional Development Model	3	
3	The staff training has partial alignment with the Iowa Professional Development Model	3	
5	The staff training is clearly and explicitly aligned with the Iowa Professional Development Model	3	

**Review Comments:**

Action Plan (15 points maximum possible)

Rubric value	Descriptor	X Weighting	Points
1	There are no actions proposed.	3	
3	Actions proposed are not clearly aligned with project goals and the district's comprehensive school improvement plan.	3	
5	Actions proposed are specifically written and directly linked to project goals, based on student achievement data, and are aligned to the district's comprehensive school improvement plan. clear	3	

**Review Comments:**

Research Base (15 points maximum possible)

Rubric value	Descriptor	X Weighting	Points
1	The research base is not identified.	3	
3	The research base is identified.	3	
5	The research base is identified and an explanation is included regarding the expected improvement in student achievement.	3	

**Review Comments:**

Timeline (5 points maximum possible)

Rubric value	Descriptor	X Weighting	Points
1	There is no identified timeline for the project.	1	
3	The timeline includes dates assigned to project activities.	1	
5	The timeline includes specific dates assigned to project activities that are aligned with the action plan.	1	

**Review Comments:**

Collaboration (10 points maximum possible)

Rubric value	Descriptor	X Weighting	Points
1	The proposal indicates little collaboration in the design and implementation of the project.	2	
3	The proposal provides documentation that there has been collaboration provided in the design and implementation of the project.	2	
5	The proposal provides evidence that all parties have had the opportunity for input and will continue to have input in the design and implementation of the project via committees, meetings, etc.	2	

**Review Comments:**

Evaluation (5 points maximum possible)

Rubric value	Descriptor	X Weighting	Points
1	Indicators have not been designed for the evaluation process.	1	
3	The plan for a reliable and valid summative evaluation is presented.	1	
5	A formative and summative evaluation plan that is reliable and valid is presented measuring the anticipated outcomes and project effectiveness.	1	

**Review Comments:**

Budget (5 points maximum possible)

Rubric value	Descriptor	X Weighting	Points
1	Budget categories are not clearly aligned with proposed project activities.	1	
3	Budget categories are partially aligned with proposed project activities.	1	
5	Budget categories are clearly & explicitly aligned with proposed project activities	1	

**Review Comments:**

Sustainability (15 points maximum possible)

Rubric value	Descriptor	X Weighting	Points
1	There is no indication that the district will continue this project beyond the initial grant funding.	3	
3	Some support is evident for sustaining this project beyond initial grant funding.	3	
5	The proposal links this new project with past or ongoing activities and demonstrates the ability of the LEA to continue activities after the grant funds end.	3	

**Review Comments:**

**DUE: September 15, 2004**

## **APPLICATION COVER SHEET**

**Iowa Department of Education  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319**

### **Application for Achievement Gap Grant**

Applying LEA \_\_\_\_\_

Program Director/Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

District K-12 Enrollment for 2003-04 from the BEDS \_\_\_\_\_

### **Statement of Assurances**

Should an Achievement Gap Award be made to the applicant in support of the activities proposed in this application, the authorized signature on the cover page of this application certifies to the Iowa Department of Education that the authorized official will:

1. Upon request, provide the Iowa Department of Education with access to records and other sources of information that may be necessary to determine compliance with appropriate federal and state laws and regulations;
2. Use grant funds to supplement and not supplant funds from nonfederal sources.

#### **Certification by Authorized or Institutional Official:**

The applicant certifies that to the best of his/her knowledge the information in this application is correct, that the filing of this application is duly authorized by the governing body of this organization, or institution, and that the applicant will comply with the attached statement of assurances.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Typed or Printed Name of Authorized Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please submit to Del Hoover, Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building,  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146 by or before 4:30 p.m. September 15, 2004.**

# Partner Identification Form

If your plan includes a partnership, please include a Partnership Identification form for each partner institution/organization.

**PARTNER INSTITUTION:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Primary Contact

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Commitment: Describe the long-term involvement in planning and implementation in this project.

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Sustainability: Describe how the activity will be sustained over time.

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Capacity: Describe the committed resources to support the project

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## Budget and Budget Narrative

**Budget Form:** Applicants must use the budget form provided with the application materials. The budget must align with the actions described in the application.

**Budget Narrative:** Applicants must provide a narrative describing the budget. The narrative should provide details about the budget, as applicable, such as the number and roles of personnel who will be paid using grant funds, the type of contracted professional services, and the rationale for teacher stipends, substitute teachers, instructional materials, and supplies and materials.

<b>Personnel</b>		
Salary		
Benefits		
Expenses (Mileage, Meals, Lodging)		
<b>Professional Services</b>		
Honorarium		
Expenses (Mileage, Meals, Lodging)		
<b>Teacher Stipends</b>		
<b>Substitute Teachers</b>		
<b>Instructional Materials</b>		
<b>Supplies and Materials</b>		
<b>Other – specify:</b>		
<b>Other – specify:</b>		
<b>Administrative Costs (Indirect Costs)</b>		
<b>Total</b>		
<b>Other</b>		
<b>Indirect Costs*</b>		

\*Indirect Costs – Contact the School Finance Team for your District’s indirect cost rate.

**This form is a required element of the grant application. Justification for each of the categories shall be included.**

## **Eligibility Checklist**

Use this list to assist you in determining if you have included all necessary components of the grant application and if you have them in the order requested. This checklist in no way replaces the responsibility of the applicant to meet all stated requirements for application. This list will be used by Department Staff to check for application eligibility.

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
The cover page is the first page evident on the document and includes all required information.		
The signature on at least one of the copies submitted is original, not electronically or otherwise mechanically produced.		
One original and five copies were submitted.		
The application, in hard copy form, was submitted by or before the 4:30 p.m. deadline on September 15, 2004, to Del Hoover at the Iowa Department of Education.		
An abstract is included and does not exceed two (2) pages, printed on one (1) side only.		
All components of the application are included and are in the following order: 1. Cover Sheet 2. Abstract 3. Project Narrative and Timeline 4. Budget 5. Budget Narrative 6. Partnership Agreements (if applicable) 7. Appendices (if included)		
The total number of pages NOT including the Cover Sheet and Appendices does not exceed twenty-five (25). Each page, beginning with the first page <u>after</u> the Cover Sheet and not including Appendices, is <b>numbered</b> .		
The font size for the application is not smaller than 12-point regardless of font style. (Any style may be used.) Exception: tables, charts, and the Cover Sheet may be in a smaller size, but must be clear and easy to read.		
All narrative must be double-spaced. Exception: the abstract, charts, and tables do not have to be double-spaced.		